

Message Text

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SUBJECT: MEDIA DEVELOPMENTS: LISBON LEADING DAILY REAPPEARS

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(B) LISBON 7201 DTG 031709Z DEC 75

SUMMARY: ALL EXCEPT ONE OF THE EIGHT STATE -OWNED DAILY NEWSPAPERS

NOW HAVE RESUMED PUBLICATION. THEY RETURNED TO THE NEWSSTANDS

WITH RESPECTABLE BALANCE AND A NOTABLE ABSENCE OF PRO-COMMUNIST

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PROPAGANDA, CONTRARY TO THE GENERAL STATE OF AFFAIRS BEFORE NOV

25, SO THAT THE GOP BASICALLY HAS MET ITS GOAL OF REDUCING MOST PCP INFLUENCE IN THE MEDIA. MANY COMMUNIST PARTY SUPPORTERS HAVE BEEN SUSPENDED FROM OR HAVE VOLUNTARILY DEPARTED FROM THE STAFFS OF THESE PAPERS IN THE PROCESS OF IMPOSED INTERNAL REORGANIZATIONS. NONETHELESS, THERE ARE ENOUGH COMMUNISTS REMAINING ON THE NEWS STAFFS OF SOME OF THE NEWSPAPERS--AND ON THE STAFFS OF GOVERNMENT-OWNED RADIO AND TV NETWORKS--TO CONTINUE AS A FOCUS OF CONTROVERSY AND OPPOSITION TO THE AZEVEDO GOVERNMENT AND TO A FAIR, BALANCED MEDIA SITUATION. END SUMMARY.

1. RETURN OF "DIARIO DE NOTICIAS": "DIARIO DE NOTICIAS," WHICH BEFORE NOV 25 WAS THE WIDEST-CIRCULATING LISBON MORNING DAILY, RESUMED PUBLICATION DEC 22 UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT. ITS TWO TOP EDITORS, VICTOR CUNHA REGO AND MARIO MESQUITA, ARE PROMINENT SOCIALIST PARTY LEADERS, ALTHOUGH THE LEAD EDITORIAL IN THE DEC 22 EDITION PROCLAIMED THAT "DIARIO" WOULD BE THE FIEFDOM OF "NO SOCIAL GROUP AND OF NO POLITICAL ORGANIZATION." THE IRST ISSUE SINCE NOV 25 WAS WELL BALANCED EDITORIALY, AN IMPROESSIVE CONTRAST WITH THE PAPER'S COMMUNIST-LINING APPROACH UNTIL IT WAS OBLIGED TO HALT PUBLICATION DURING LAST MONTH'S STATE OF SIEGE. "DIARIO" WAS THE SEVENTH PAPER WITH SOME DEGREE OF STATE OWNER-SHIP TO RESUME PUBLICATION IN THE PAST TWO WEEKS UNDER NEW OR RECONFIRMED LEADERSHIP APPROVED BY THE GOP. ONLY LISBON'S "O SEculo," SRACKED BY INTERNAL STRIFE AND RIDDLED WITH PCP ADHERENTS, HAS FAILED TO REAPPEAR SO FAR; NEW ADMINISTRATORS AND EDITORS HAVE BEEN NAMED, BUT THEY AS YET HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO RESOLVE STAFF AND TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES AND TO RESUME PUBLICATION. ANOTHER STATE-OWNED PAPER, THE AFTERNOON "DIARIO DE LISBOA," EVIDENCES A NUMBER OF PCP SYMPATHIZERS ON ITS STAFF--EVEN AFTER THE PRO-COMMUNIST TOP ADITORS WE "SUSPENDED."

2. PLIGHT OF THE COMMUNISTS: RESULT OF THE PURGES AND OTHER GOP RPRESSURES ON LISBON'S STATE-OWNED PAPERS (TWO OTHERS ARE IN OPORTO) HAS BEEN A RETURN TO MORE BALANCED NEWS DIET. NOW DEPRIVED OF THEIR PREVIOUS READY ACCESS TO A MAJOR PORTION OF PORTUGUESE NEWSPAPERS, THE COMMUNISTS ARE PLANNING TO LAUNCH THEIR OWN DAILY IN EARLY JANUARY. IT WILL BE CALLED "O DIARIO," AND WILL BE PUBLISHED ON THE ULTRA-MODERN OFFSET PRESSES THE PCP OWNS FOR PRINTING THE PARTY'S WEEKLY PAPER, "AVANTE." EDITORS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WILL BE COMMUNISTS DISPLACED FROM "DIARIO DE LISBOA" AND OTHER PAPERS. THERE ALSO HAVE BEEN REPORTS THAT THE PRO-COMMUNIST INTELLECTUALS' GROUP, MUTI, SHORTLY WILL BEGIN PUBLISHING A NEW SEMI-WEEKLY WHICH IT LATER MIGHT CONVERT INTO A DAILY.

3. AN IMPROVING BUT MIXED SITUATION AT TV NETWORK: THE MOST OFFENSIVELY PRO-COMMUNIST PROGRAMMING HAS BEEN REMOVED FRO THE STATE-OWNED TV NETWORK SINCE NOV 25, AND STAFF SUSPENSIONS

(SEE REFTELS) REMAIN IN EFFECT. SOME KNOWN PCP SYMPATHIZERS REMAIN IN THE NEWSROOM, HOWEVER, AND THEY CONTINUE TO INFLUENCE NEWSCAST CONTENT. FOR INSTANCE, DEC 21 EVENING NEWSCAST INCLUDED LENGTHY REPORT ON UNEMPLOYED FORMER WORKERS AT U.S. FIRM'S PORTUGUESE SUBSIDIARY--CLOSED DOWN IN LONG WORKER-MANAGEMENT DISPUTE--IN WHICH THE SITUATION WAS CHARACTERIZED AS "TYPICAL AMERICAN IMPERIALISM."

4. RADIO DEVELOPMENTS: A MAJOR CONTROVERSY APPARENTLY IS SHAPING UP OVER GOP DISCUSSION ABOUT POSSIBLY CREATING ONE CENTRAL NEWSROOM WHICH WOULD PREPARE ALL NEWS PROGRAMS, BOTH FOR ITS OWN EMISSORA NACIONAL NETWORK AND ALSO FOR THE NEWLY NATIONALIZED COMMERCIAL STATIONS. OPPONENTS OF THIS PLAN--INCLUDING PRO-COMMUNISTS WHO USED TO DOMINATE THE AIR WAVES, BEFORE NOV 25--WILL CRY "CENSORSHIP*". RADIO CLUBE PORTUGUES, THE PRINCIPAL COMMERCIAL NETWORK, REMAINS OFF THE AIR IN LISBON ALTHOUGH IT IS OPERATING IN OPORTO AND CENTRA PORTUGAL.

IT IS EXPECTED THAT LISBON FACILITIES OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH'S RADIO RENASCENCA SHORTLY WILL BE RETURNED TO THE CHURCH BY THE GOVERNMENT. NEW TRANSMITTER THE STUDIO EQUIPMENT WILL BE NEEDED, ACCORDING TO RADIO RENASCENCA AUTHORITIES; THE GOP BOMBED TRANSMITTER FACILITIES IN EARLY NOV TO PUT STATION OFF AIR WHEN IT WAS OCCUPIED BY COMMUNIST WORKERS' GROUP.

5. COMMENT: THE GOP HAS CONTINUED TO MOVE AHEAD BOLDLY IN DEFANGING THE STATE-OWNED MEDIA, WHICH BEFORE NOV 25 LARGELY PROMOTED COMMUNIST INTERESTS AND OPPOSED THE AZEVEDO GOVERNMENT. IT HAS MADE MAJOR SHORT-TERM GAINS, ALTHOUGH THERE ARE STILL A LOT OF COMMUNISTS IN THE WOODWORK WHO LIKELY WILL RAISE PROBLEMS FROM TIME TO TIME. THE GOP EARLIER INDICATED THAT AT LEAST TWO STATE-OWNED PAPERS WOULD HAVE TO GO BY THE BOARDS, BUT IT HAS NOT YET DEFINED WHICH THESE WILL BE; LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WHATEVER THE DECISION, IT WILL BE HIGHLY CONTESTED. SOME WORKERS WILL BECOME UNEMPLOYED, AND THIS WILL BE A CORE ISSUE. MEANWHILE, THE PUBLIC IS BETTER INFORMED AND THE PRESENT MEDIA SITUATION IS A MUCH HEALTHIER ONE FOR THE MONTHS LEADING UP TO THE NATIONAL ELECTIONS SCHEDULED FOR EARLY 1976. CARLUCCI

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